Yes, we are here!

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Depression Era: Frugal Recipes

Nothing could be more soothing - and frugal - than homemade dumplings.

In 1941, near the end of the depression era, we moved into a drafty old farmhouse that was really uncomfortable in the wintertime. Our potatoes froze behind the heating stove, and there was ice in the fishbowl. The wood heater had a flat top. I had to use it for a cookstove. My husband's hours were irregular, so I had to use frugal recipes that would stay hot and still be palatable. One of my favorites was Beef Stew with Cornmeal Dumplings: bread, meat and vegetables all in one pot.

My husband had a sweet tooth, and since I couldn't bake cakes and pies, Dessert Dumplings with Caramel Sauce was one of his favorites. Parsley Potato Dumplings were good with soup and also made a hearty meal.

During the winter months the hens didn't lay and we were without eggs. Therefore, we were always on the lookout for "eggless" recipes. It was unheard of for farmers to buy eggs! We found that many of the recipes were acceptable without eggs. We hadn't heard of cholesterol or that there was danger of salmonella in raw eggs. Most of the old recipes called for lard, cream and butter and we were unaware that they were "hazardous to our health!"

During the depression, we didn't buy anything that could be made at home! I had a notebook that I copied frugal recipes in, and it contains a lot of information, how to make Shampoo, Varnish Remover, Wallpaper Paste, Library Paste, a Cinder Plant and even remedies for Calf Scours and Ear Canker! Many of the old recipes called for sorghum and honey, especially during the time of sugar rationing. We also made use of wild game and fish.

HONEY CAKE

1 cup sour cream
1 cup honey
2 eggs

Mix well. Sift together 2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon soda. Add to other ingredients, add 1 teaspoon vanilla. Mix well and bake in moderate oven until top springs back when lightly touched.

ECONOMY PIE

2/3 cup vinegar 1 cup sugar
1 cup hot water 2 egg yolks
2 tablespoons corn starch Butter size of an egg

Mix vinegar, sugar, cornstarch and egg yolks until smooth, stir into boiling water. Stir constantly until it thickens. Pour into baked pie shell. Cool and top with meringue made with the 2 egg whites.

MOCK ANGEL FOOD CAKE

1 cup scalded milk

Mix together 1 cup flour, 1 cup sugar, 3 level teaspoons baking
powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt and sift well. Stir into scalded milk. Fold
in 3 stiffly-beaten egg whites. Bake in small tube pan in 350 degree oven until done.

CORN MEAL DUMPLINGS

Cost, 10 cents (November 1941) Serves 4 to 6 Woman's Day Kitchen
1 cup white corn meal
1 cup sifted flour
1 teaspoon baking powder 1/2 teaspoon soda
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon lard
1 egg, grade B
1 cup buttermilk

Sift dry ingredients together into a bowl; work in lard with fork. Combine well-beaten egg and buttermilk. Add to dry ingredients mixing only enough to moisten flour. Do not mix until smooth. Drop by teaspoonfuls into gently boiling pot, broth, soup, or on top of turnip, mustard or collard greens. Cover, cook 20 minutes. Serve at once.

SHAMPOO

Flake a bar of castile soap. Melt soap in one pint of boiling water, then cool. Put soap mixture into mixing bowl, and add one egg. Beat with rotary egg beater; put in jar. After it settles, it is ready to use. This shampoo will keep indefinitely.

NEWSLETTER
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Reva Seckington
Marshall, Missouri

Back in 1955 a call went out from the editors of the then Capper's Weekly asking for readers to send in articles on true pioneers. Hundreds of letters came pouring in from early settlers and their

in articles on true pioneers. Hundreds of letters came pouring in from early settlers and their children, many now in their 80s and 90s, and from grandchildren of settlers, all with tales to tell. So many articles were received that a decision was made to create a book, and in 1956, the first My Folks title – My Folks Came in a Covered Wagon – hit the shelves. Nine other books have since been published in the My Folks series, all filled to the brim with true tales from Capper's readers, and we are proud to make those stories available to our growing online community.

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